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Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Secretary-General holds discussions with leaders and senior officials attending the Non-Aligned Summit in Cartagena, Colombia.

* Croatian President says his army will not attack Serb-held Eastern Slavonia while peace talks are continuing.

* General Michael Jackson of the United Kingdom is to succeed General Rupert Smith as new Commander of UNPROFOR.

* Prosecutor for Rwanda Tribunal confirms first indictments are to be issued before end of year.

* High Commissioner for Human Rights calls for a new partnership between men and women based on sharing of power and of responsibilities.

* UNESCO Director-General calls for education and culture of peace at fifth Ibero-American Summit.

* WHO establishes rapid-response unit to combat growing world-wide threat of emerging diseases.

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In Cartagena, Colombia, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has been holding discussions with leaders at the summit conference of the Non-Aligned Movement. A United Nations spokesman said the Secretary-General met with the Foreign Minister of Libya, Omar Mustafa Muntasser. It was reported that they discussed the relevant Security Council resolutions, including the sanctions in the hope that progress could be made toward a solution of those problems.

The Secretary-General later had a meeting with President Soeharto of Indonesia, the outgoing Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement. According to the spokesman, they discussed issues relating to East Timor in the context of the talks which would take place in London on 16 January 1996 and the financial situation of the United Nations.

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Discussions at a meeting between the Secretary-General and Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, focussed on the current situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Pakistan's troop contributions to the United Nations, peacekeeping in that country and the situation in Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Kashmir.

The Secretary-General left Cartagena for New York Thursday morning.

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Croatian President Franjo Tudjman has said his army would not attack Serb-held Eastern Slavonia while peace talks were in progress in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The assurance comes amid rising fears that Croatia was planning an imminent invasion. Earlier this week, United States Secretary of State Warren Christopher had warned against military force, saying it would be "very costly" to Croatia and its desire to join western institutions.

In an interview with United Nations Radio in the former Yugoslavia, President Tudjman's spokeswoman Natasa Rajakovic said Croatia "would do nothing to disrupt the peace process in Bosnia". She said Croatia was for attempts to solve this problem peacefully, and the deadline determined was the end of the current mandate of the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia (UNCRO). She said Croatia had no intention of jeopardizing the present United States-led peace initiative.

Meanwhile, there was little change in the military situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The cease-fire was continuing to hold in general, but fighting was going on in the northwest, according to a spokesman for the organization. United Nations peace-keepers were still having their freedom of movement restricted in the area, mainly by government forces, and so did not have detailed information on the fighting.

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General Michael Jackson of the United Kingdom is to succeed General Rupert Smith as Commander of the United Nations Protection Force in the former Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR) a United Nations spokesman announced today. General Jackson is to take up his new position later this year.

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The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda has confirmed that the first indictment would be issued before the end of the year and that further indictments would be issued in the following months. In a statement today, Richard Goldstone said the indictments would reflect the policy of investigating and indicting the persons who held positions of authority in relation to the mass killings in Rwanda in mid-1994. The

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indictments would be presented for confirmation to a judge of the Tribunal at the seat of the Tribunal in Arusha.

According to the Prosecutor, significant progress had been made recently in the establishment and work of the Rwanda Tribunal, despite the financial constraints imposed on it. Work was able to proceed by drawing from the Trust Fund of the Tribunal in order to meet the operating expenses. By the end of October it was expected that the staff of the Tribunal would total more than 50 investigators and attorneys.

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A new partnership between men and women, based on the sharing of power and of responsibilities and ensuring the active role of women in both public and private sectors, should be the principal objective, Jose Ayala Lasso, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, said as he opened the Human Rights Committee's fifty-fifth session at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

The Human Rights Committee exchanged views on its draft general comment on article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. That discussion was within the framework of the right of citizens to take part in the conduct of public affairs through elections and referendums.

Article 25 of the Covenant recognizes and protects the right of every citizen to take part in the conduct of public affairs, the right to vote and to be elected, and the right to have access to public service. According to that article, every citizen has the right to vote and be elected at genuine periodic elections, which should be by universal and equal suffrage and should be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors.

Unreasonable or discriminatory disqualifying factors, such as educational qualifications, political affiliation or residence, should not be used as a means of excluding particular classes of citizens from elective office, members of the Human Rights Committee emphasized. The Committee affirmed that excessive financial deposits or fees should not be a condition for the exercise of the right to stand for election.

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UNESCO's Director-General has called on nations to invest at least 6 per cent of gross domestic product in education by the end of the century. To this end, he offered the Organization's cooperation for developing education in Latin America and the Caribbean. Director-General Federico Mayor told the 5th Ibero-American Summit in San Carlos de Bariloche, Argentina, that to contribute to the task, UNESCO would organize a meeting of Latin American and Caribbean Ministers of education to be held in Jamaica next spring. He said

the meeting could effectively assist in carrying out the agreements adopted at Ibero-American summit. Mr. Mayor noted that education for all is the responsibility of all.

The 5th Ibero-American Summit in San Carlos de Bariloche, brought together heads of State or government from Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain and Portugal.

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The World Health Organization (WHO) has established a rapid-response unit to control and prevent the growing incidence of new and re-emerging diseases around the world. Its purpose is to improve containment of outbreaks, such as the deadly Ebola virus which struck Zaire earlier this year.

The unit will be capable of mobilizing staff from both WHO headquarters in Geneva and from the agency's regional offices. The teams could be placed on-site within 24 hours' notification of an outbreak, together with the supplies and equipment required
to implement epidemic control measures.

The new unit will be called the Division of Emerging, Viral and Bacterial Diseases Surveillance and Control (EMC). In addition to mobilizing WHO's own technical staff and expertise, EMC will also co-ordinate the activities of the agency's traditional partners, including its international network of collaborating centres, bilateral donors, expert advisers and non-governmental organizations.

EMC will work to strengthen country surveillance and disease control mechanisms to enable countries to develop the early-warning systems necessary to detect emerging or re-emerging diseases through innovative field epidemiology and public health laboratory training programmes. The new division will also continue WHO's activities in developing a network of public health laboratories to strengthen regional and international collaboration in outbreak detection and control.

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